



Needham Market Town Council
Governance & Finance Committee
Minutes 13th February 2024

Present: Chairperson Cllr Annis; Cllrs, Darnell, Lea, Ost, O'Shea, A Reardon and Stansfield.

The Town Clerk was in attendance.

GF001/24 To receive apologies for absence.

Cllrs Cave, Mason, Norris, Phillips, J Reardon.

GF002/24 To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

Cllr Annis – Grants/Donations 2023/24 (Community Centre)

Cllr Stansfield - Grants/Donations 2023/24 (Community Centre)

GF003/24 To approve any dispensations with respect to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

None.

GF004/24 To receive and confirm Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Finance Committee held on 7th November 2023.

The minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee held on 7th November 2023 were adopted at the full Town Council meeting held on 15th November 2023.

GF005/24 To consider Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

Cllr Annis proposed the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation be approved. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

GF006/24 To consider grants/donations 2023/24

The Clerk confirmed £4,400 has been paid in grants/donation from the £7,500 2023/24 grants/donations budget leaving an unspent balance of £3,100.

A request for support had been received from Headway, Suffolk, a charity that supports people with brain injury, stroke, neurological conditions, and those who

care for them. The Committee recalled that support had been granted to Headway in past years.

Cllr Lea proposed £200 be donated to Headway, Suffolk. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

Needham Market Library has requested the Town Council pay its annual broadband charge, as it has done previously.

Cllr Stanfield proposed a grant of £612 be provided to Needham Market Library in payment for its annual broadband charge. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

The Clerk had circulated a report prior to the meeting, written by a consultant working on behalf of Mid Suffolk District Council and with the management of Needham Market Community Centre, on bringing forward projects to improve various aspects of the Community Centre building and its services. The report focussed on the desperate need for the central heating/hot water boiler to be replaced, it now failing on a regular basis.

Councillor O'Shea raised his concern regarding the detail of the proposed boiler replacement and that it did not meet with environmental sustainability standards. Cllr Annis explained the context in which the boiler replacement had become an urgent issue. He confirmed alternatives to the traditional gas boiler system had been thoroughly investigated but discounted on grounds of feasibility and viability.

The Clerk confirmed financial support for the boiler replacement could be granted from Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) albeit it would override the current prioritised objectives of the Community Infrastructure Investment Plan (CIIP) adopted by Council. Details of the Council's current CIL commitments and available funds were provided by the Clerk.

Cllr Lea said the Community Centre has done exceptionally well in operating for several decades without calling on Town Council financial support to help protect its sustainability. In many other communities, the main hall/community building will invariably be the direct responsibility of the Town/Parish Council and often need ongoing and substantial subsidy.

Cllr Darnell proposed £5,000 be granted to Needham Market Community Centre as a contribution to its boiler replacement project. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

GF007/24 Update on Governance and Finance Arrangements.

- a) To monitor the Council's approved Budget 2023/24 against actual expenditure.

This was undertaken at the full Town Council meeting held 17th

January 2024 (end of 3rd Quarter).

- b) Review of the Council's Financial Management procedures including consideration of amendments to Council's Financial Regulations.

No action was required.

- c) Review of Council's Community Infrastructure Levy priorities and expenditure.

A partial review had been conducted in earlier debate (see **GF006/24** above)

- d) Review of Council's Policies.

There were no policies for review.

- e) Review of the Council's Risk Assessment.

All Risk Assessment requirements were up to date (including that for the forthcoming Climate Action Group tree planting event 17th February 2024).

GF008/24 To consider matters raised in the Council's Internal Audit Report 2022/23.

The Committee agreed no further action need be taken.

GF009/24 To scrutinise any matters referred from, or to, Council's Community & Assets Committee and/or Planning Committee.

Cllr A Readon reported a public meeting is to be held in the Community Centre on 23rd March, which is aimed at establishing a Flood Group in the town. The Committee agreed the room hire cost for the meeting would be paid by the Town Council.

GF010/24 To receive a report from the Town Council's Employment Committee.

There was no report.

GF011/24 Date, location and timing of the next Governance & Finance Committee meeting.

Cllr Annis reported the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday 7th May 2024, at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 7:42 pm.

Chairperson..... **Date**.....